

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 2-AWASHINGTON TIMES
24 February 1986

Chin's prison-cell writings to be inspected for secrets

By Ed Rogers
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Chinese writings that convicted spy Larry Wu-tai Chin left in his cell when he committed suicide will be checked by FBI agents today to see if they contain any classified information, the U.S. Marshals Service said yesterday.

The outpouring of writings in Chinese during the past several weeks remained a mystery to officials yesterday.

Chin, 63, was convicted Feb. 7 in U.S. District Court in Alexandria on 17 counts of espionage. He was found guilty of spying for the People's Republic of China for 30 years while working at the Central Intelligence Agency.

Facing a maximum of two life sentences plus 83 additional years and \$2.5 million in fines, he was to have been sentenced March 17.

Attendants at the suburban Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center found Chin unconscious last Friday morning with a plastic bag over his head, secured with shoelaces tied around his neck. He died later, an apparent suicide.

Stephen Boyle, a spokesman for the U.S. Marshals Service, said a "substantial quantity" of writings in Chinese was found in Chin's cell.

"These are writings that he has generated in the last several weeks, during the late course of his trial or since the trial," Mr. Boyle said. "Evidently, he spent a good bit of his time writing. Because of the nature of the crime for which he was convicted, there is a potential for a continuing national security concern."

The papers will be reviewed by the FBI

agents who led the investigations before Chin's indictment and trial, Mr. Boyle said.

Asked to guess what the agents will find, Mr. Boyle said: "That will have to be one of those leaps of imagination. He could have been writing poetry . . . memoirs . . . personal thoughts directed to members of this family."

Will the agents be looking for a suicide note?

"Oh, certainly," Mr. Boyle said. "If there were anything in the writings that would help explain the motive for his actions, that would be part of the official investigative record into the incident."

Any papers that are not held will be turned over to Chin's family, Mr. Boyle said.

Virginia authorities ruled in an autopsy report that Chin died of asphyxiation, but added that "the medical results were consistent with the evidence of suicide discovered by those that found the body," Mr. Boyle said.

One of Chin's two sons said he was surprised by the suicide even though his father had been despondent since the trial.

"During the trial, he was despondent about the way things were going," the son said. "He was worried that his side of the story wasn't coming out the way he wanted it to."

Chin claimed in his testimony that he stole secret U.S. documents to help improve relations between then-President Nixon and Chinese Premier Chou-En-lai.

Chin began working as an interpreter at the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai in 1948 and then for the U.S. Consulate in Hong Kong before coming to the United States in 1952 and joining the CIA's Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1970. He retired from the CIA in 1981 but was retained as a consultant.